

23 May 1963

1. Question:

Can the air cargo shipments of Russian publications from Moscow to Washington be sent via Warsaw, so that U.S. payments may be limited to the Moscow - Warsaw portion of the trip, the Warsaw - Washington portion being paid for out of surplus Polish zloty in the U.S. Treasury?

Answer:

This question was referred to Mrs. Virginia Ralston, Post Management Officer for Warsaw, on extension 2032. Mrs. Ralston, who has also served at Embassy Moscow, was formerly Budget and Fiscal Officer at Warsaw and is thus knowledgeable of the legal and operational aspects of the PL 480 Program.

Mrs. Ralston does not believe that the air cargo shipments, if routed via Warsaw, can be made without delay. For example, if USSR publications were to depart Moscow on Thursdays, as they currently do, and arrive in Warsaw that same day or the following Friday, there would be a holdup of several days in Warsaw in order to check, identify and repackage this mail. It appears that the use of zloty in this case would necessitate ascertaining the weight, size, and equivalent zloty for ruble value of each piece transmitted.

It is therefore not recommended that any such change in the present air cargo route be made. The whole point of the air cargo shipments from Moscow is to save time and bring the publications to the hands of the researchers as quickly as possible.

2. Question:

Can PL 480 funds be used in excess currency countries to acquire indigenous publications and/or publications sold in such countries?

Answer:

This question was settled some time ago by Congressional action, which appointed the Library of Congress administrator of the PL 480 Program involving the acquisition, indexing, cataloging and housing of foreign published data acquired under the Program.

At the present time, the Library of Congress has field offices in New Delhi, Karachi, and Cairo carrying out the acquisition and forwarding to Washington of publications obtained in India, Pakistan, and Egypt

respectively. The Library hopes to cover Israel, Indonesia, Burma, Yugoslavia, and Poland in similar fashion. There are several problems in this regard, however, including the following: Indonesia is in the throes of a severe inflationary spiral, which has and continues to affect adversely its foreign credit level; Israel's "funny money" is limited, and the National Science Foundation is already using a good portion of it for the translation program it operates there; Burma no longer buys PL 480 products from the U.S. and as a result its excess currency balance will not increase; Poland and Yugoslavia present political problems, there is a reluctance to increase the American presence there, there is a shortage of available space for the Program's administrators, etc.

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The Department of State Library (LS), the USIA Library, and certain other Federal libraries are sharing in a cooperative scheme, set up by the Library of Congress, the acquisition of selected publications acquired by the PL 480 Program. These publications consist primarily of governmental issuances of Egypt, India, and Pakistan, which are provided by the host governments in exchange for deposit sets or portions of deposit sets of U.S. Government publications.

In a narrow sense, then, the PL 480 Program permits the use of excess currency to acquire foreign publications. However, the following limiting points should be borne in mind:

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1. The PL 480 Program is "permissive", i.e., the member libraries here and abroad agree to exchange specific publications or to accept deposit sets of official publications. This is not an effective method for acquiring foreign publications of all kinds, shapes, or of all shades of political leanings to meet the continual changing needs of the intelligence community.
 2. The use of excess currencies to acquire foreign publications does not obviate the need to employ people to obtain them. The Library of Congress currently employs several American personnel who are stationed abroad to supervise these operations, and the local personnel employed to perform them.
 3. The disbursing officers at appropriate posts are used to handle all PL 480 monetary transactions. The pouch facilities of the Department of State are used to send material to and receive material from PL 480 Program posts.
 4. The greatest volume of requirements for the PFO's concern publications issued in the Sino-Soviet Bloc. There are currently only eight countries in which currencies are regarded as excess for Fiscal

Year 1964, and these countries, excepting Poland and Yugoslavia where no PL 480 operations have yet been developed, do not provide the materials required by the intelligence community on the Bloc.

3. Question:

Can resident Americans be employed as Publications Procurement Officers (PPO) on either a full- or part-time basis?

Answer:

Qualified Americans living abroad could be profitably employed in the acquisition of publications. It is not of course necessarily true that all Americans living abroad are so qualified because of their national origin.

Former PPO's who have retired and live abroad constitute one fully qualified category. Retired Foreign Service and other governmental personnel would also constitute a reservoir of potential PPO's.

There are a few technical and legal questions which need to be further developed in this regard:

- a. Would governmental retirees so employed stand to lose any part of their retirement income thereby?
- b. Would the salaries of such appointees be limited to the existing wage scales approved for Foreign Service local employees?
- c. Do resident Americans enjoy appropriate security approval? Can any such individuals who may have married foreigners subsequent to their retirement be security approved for employment?

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